

Republican rule their inability to manage themselves and others.<sup>13</sup>

Using these themes, Simmons developed a strong anti-Republican, anti-black stance for the Democratic Party. Like previous platforms, the 1898 strategy focused on accomplishments of the Democrats when in power and preached the pitfalls of black officeholding. But, the 1898 campaign also took new paths in planning and preparation for the November elections. Simmons made effective uses of manpower through better party organization and control of county Democratic Party committees. County committee chairs received weekly correspondence from the state headquarters plus quantities of posters and circulars—some two million documents statewide throughout the campaign.<sup>14</sup> Simmons' successful 1892 campaign was the organizational framework for the 1898 campaign, as he united business interests and citizen voters using claims of corruption by "Republican-Negro rule."<sup>15</sup>



Furnifold  
Simmons  
Image: North Carolina  
Collection, University  
of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill

By uniting various entities that traditionally supported the Democratic Party, Simmons achieved victory. To fund his programs, Simmons quietly called on

businessmen throughout the state and promised that the Democrats would not raise business taxes if his candidates were elected.<sup>16</sup> Josephus Daniels, a hearty supporter of the Democratic Party's white supremacy platform, recalled that Simmons was "a genius in putting everybody to work—men who could write, men who could speak, and men who could ride—the last by no means the least important."<sup>17</sup> Thus, victory was to be achieved through the unification of newspapers, traveling campaign speakers, and violent bands of men behind a singular argument—white supremacy.

Wilmington's position as the state's largest city governed by Populists and Republicans who were bolstered by a large black voting majority made it a perfect test case for Simmons' propaganda program. His print and speech program focused on the city with claims that it was under "negro domination." Articles from the city's pro-Democratic Party papers regarding local leaders were picked up and expounded upon by the *News and Observer* and the *Charlotte Observer* to demonstrate to the rest of the state the perils of non-Democratic Party leadership. To fuel the argument for the redemption of Wilmington, the *News and Observer* sent a correspondent to the city regularly to generate more fodder for the white supremacy fever.<sup>18</sup> Some Wilmingtonians prided themselves that the Democratic Party's star speechmaker, Charles Aycock's, proclaimed that the city was "the center of the white supremacy movement." After hearing speeches at a party rally in Goldsboro in October,

<sup>13</sup> *Democratic Handbook*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> C. Beauregard Poland, *North Carolina's Glorious Victory, 1898* (Raleigh, N.C., 1899), 4.

<sup>15</sup> Rippey, *Statesman of the New South*, 19, 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> Crow, *Maverick Republican*, 125.

<sup>17</sup> Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, 284.

<sup>18</sup> McDuffie, "Politics in Wilmington," 583; Daniels, *Editor in Politics*, 283-312.